Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety

Plan for 2014-15

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Government of Saskatchewan

Statement from the Minister

The Honourable | Don Morgan, Q. C.
Minister of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety

I am pleased to present the Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety's Plan for 2014-15. This document outlines how our Ministry's actions support Government's overall direction and Budget for 2014-15.

The Government's Direction and Budget for 2014-15 are built on the principle of steady growth, supporting an ongoing focus on sound economic growth and shared prosperity.

The initiatives outlined in this Plan speak to this year's budget theme, Steady Growth. My Ministry will work to invest in the citizens of Saskatchewan by fostering a competitive and productive labour environment; encouraging healthy, safe, and fair workplaces; ensuring that our labour policies are up-to-date and competitive; and, by managing our programs and services efficiently and effectively to ensure the best use of public funds.

I accept responsibility for furthering Government's commitments, values and principles while ensuring the Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety is managed with integrity and professionalism.

The Ministry will report on progress made toward this Plan, within the financial parameters provided, in the 2014-15 Annual Report.

Response to Government Direction

The Government is committed to establishing Saskatchewan as the best place to live, work and raise a family.

In October 2013, the first progress report on the *Saskatchewan Plan for Growth – Vision 2020 and Beyond* was released. Saskatchewan's growth is strong and steady. As Saskatchewan continues to move forward, the Government will support growth in 2014-15 through investing in people and needed infrastructure, encouraging economic growth, and through sound policy and financial decisions.

Saskatchewan's Vision

"... to be the best place in Canada – to live, to work, to start a business, to get an education, to raise a family and to build a life."

Securing growth and opportunities for Saskatchewan people	Meeting the challenges of growth	Securing a better quality of life for all Saskatchewan people	Delivering responsive and responsible government

Government's vision and four goals provide the framework for ministries, agencies and third parties to align their programs and services to these priorities and meet the needs of Saskatchewan's citizens.

All ministries and agencies will report on progress in their 2014-15 annual reports. This supports Government's commitment to keep its promises and ensures greater transparency and accountability to the people of Saskatchewan.

Mission, Strategies and Actions

Mission Statement

The Ministry supports sustained economic growth and prosperity through the provision of a range of services that encourage, promote and enforce safe work practices and employment standards, which foster a fair and balanced employment environment that respects the rights, duties and responsibilities of employees and employers, thereby ensuring healthy, safe and productive workplaces.

Strategy

Foster a competitive and productive labour environment

Key Actions

- Proclaim *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* (SEA) and enact associated regulations following stakeholder consultations (***Saskatchewan Plan for Growth*** – page 44).
- Introduce *The Saskatchewan Employment Amendment Act, 2013*, to amend and incorporate essential services legislation into the SEA.
- Establish the Workers' Compensation Act Committee of Review in compliance with *The Workers' Compensation Act, 2013*.
- Work with counterparts in other Canadian jurisdictions to identify and promote best practices in employment and occupational health and safety standards, and labour relations.
- Provide conciliation and mediation services to employers, employees, and unions requesting assistance to resolve disputes, conclude negotiations, or to establish or renew collective agreements.

Strategy

Encourage healthy, safe, and fair workplaces

Key Actions

- Educate employers and employees about new legislative and regulatory requirements under *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* (***Saskatchewan Plan for Growth*** – page 44).
- Enforce compliance of employment standards (ES) and occupational health and safety (OHS) requirements (***Saskatchewan Plan for Growth*** – page 44).
- Continue to respond to OHS and ES related complaints.
- Continue to deliver the Young Worker Readiness Certificate Course.
- Focus resources and intervention strategies to improve safety outcomes of priority employers with high injury rates.
- Continue to work with *WorkSafe Saskatchewan* on the High Risk Health Care Strategy that will guide health care interventions over the next three years and focus on high injury facilities and locations.
- Continue to work with the Ministry of Agriculture on the voluntary injury prevention and risk assessment program for farm and ranch operations.
- Continue to promptly and thoroughly investigate workplace incidents that lead to a serious injury or fatality.
- Encourage workplaces to adopt best practices in the areas of employment standards, occupational health and safety, and labour relations.
- Educate injured workers about the workers' compensation system and the role of the Office of the Workers' Advocate.

Photo Credit: Enterprise Saskatchewan, Greg Huszar Photography, Mosaic Belle Plaine site

Strategy

Improve effectiveness and efficiency

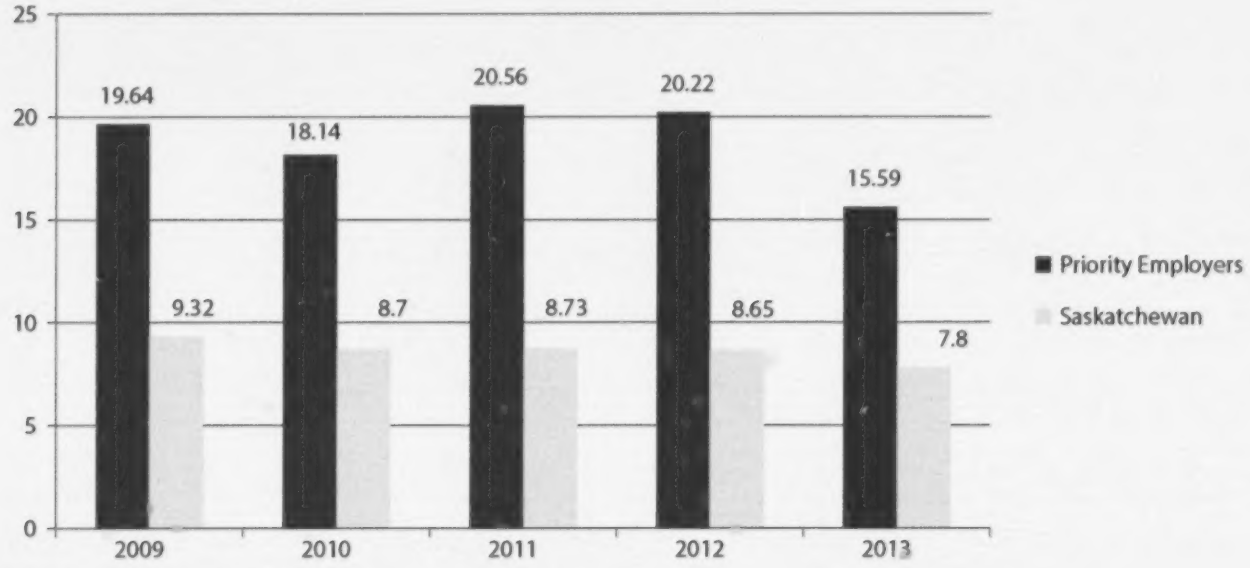
Key Actions

- Continue to improve service delivery and management practices to better respond to the needs of clients (***Saskatchewan Plan for Growth*** – pages 45 and 57).
- Review ministry programs and services to ensure they meet the needs of the public (***Saskatchewan Plan for Growth*** – page 57).
- Develop a legislative review schedule to ensure provincial labour and employment legislation takes into consideration the changing workplace and minimizes the administrative burden for employers and employees (***Saskatchewan Plan for Growth*** – page 42).

Performance Measures

Measure

Total injury rate (per 100 full-time equivalent workers) for priority employers and Saskatchewan



Source: Workers' Compensation Board

Measure Description

The graph above shows the total injury rate for priority employers and the provincial rate. Priority employers are a group of 50 employers with the highest injury rates in the Province and thus have the greatest need to improve safety outcomes. The graph illustrates that, over the last five years, the provincial rate has been steadily declining while the rate for priority employers has fluctuated with 2013 showing a new low though still twice the provincial rate.

In 2013, the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) Division started placing greater emphasis on targeted intervention strategies to improve safety outcomes for priority employers.

The new strategy works by establishing contact with employers on the targeted list to develop an improvement plan. After plans are implemented, OHS officers work with priority employers to ensure compliance. Should an employer fail to observe their plan, the Division will use the legislated tools available, including prosecution, to ensure compliance with OHS requirements.

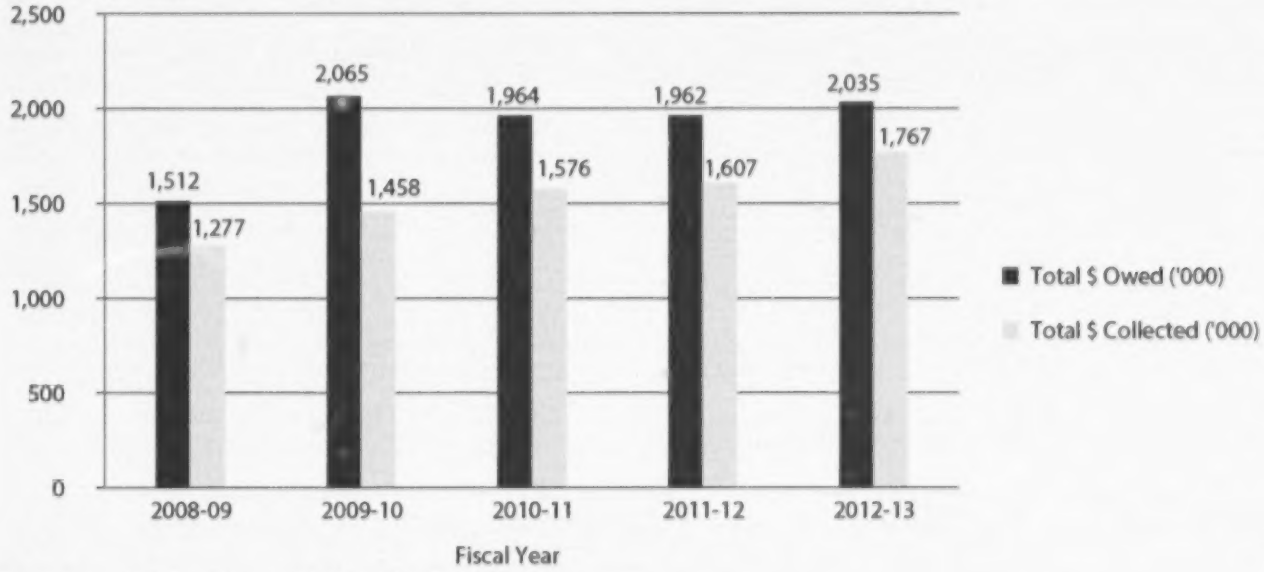
As the new compliance model matures, it will be possible to compare year-over-year actual total injury rate improvements in order to better measure program outcomes.

Data for the total injury rate is provided by the Workers' Compensation Board.

Photo Credit: Tourism Saskatoon, City of Bridges

Measure

The total amount of wages found owed and collected



Source: Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety

Measure Description

The graph above shows the total amount of wages owed and collected in a given year. Over the last five years the amount of wages collected has continually increased. During this time, Saskatchewan's labour force has increased about 5.4 per cent from 539,200 in 2008-09 to 568,500 in 2012-13.

Legislation provides the Ministry the authority to determine and collect outstanding wages owed to employees. The amount owed is determined following an investigation by a Labour Standards Officer prompted by an employee complaint alleging unpaid wages. The Officer investigates the claim and identifies any outstanding wages owed and works with the employer to ensure payment is made to the employee. Most employers make payments voluntarily and come into compliance once they understand the requirements.

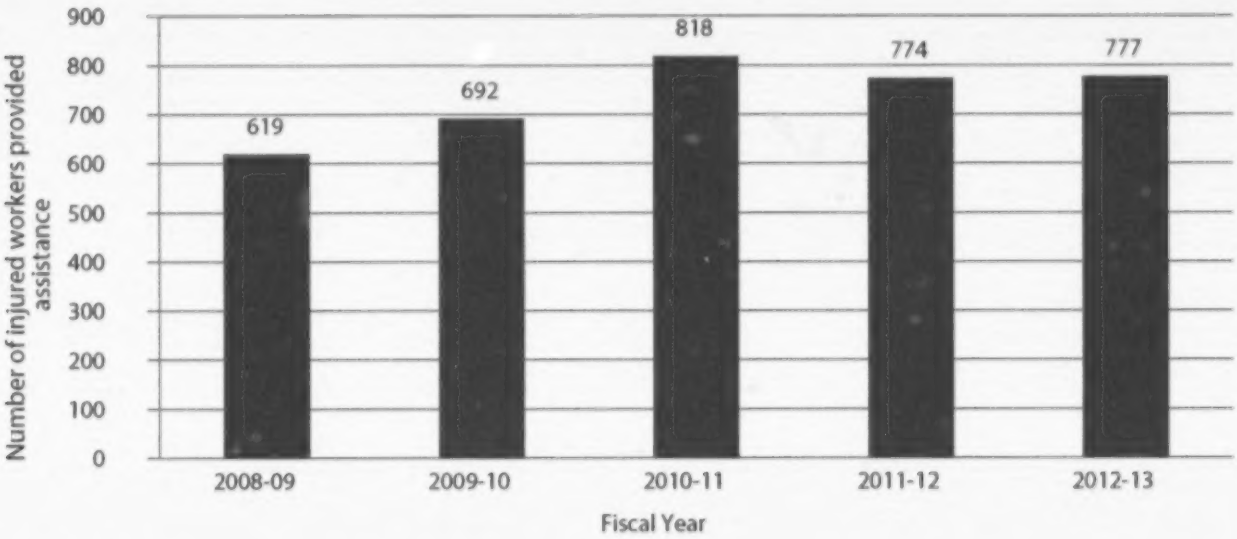
The total amount collected is the amount the Labour Standards Division has collected on the wages deemed owed. The Division employs a number of tools to ensure collection where employers have not made voluntary payments. The Director may take legal action to collect outstanding wages. The legal action is typically through the issuance of a Wage Assessment, which is appealable to an independent adjudicator. Wage Assessments that are upheld or partially upheld are then filed with the Court of Queen's Bench as a judgment. The judgment can be enforced through a number of collection mechanisms.

The data on amount of money owed and collected is gathered internally by the Ministry.

Photo Credit: Tourism Saskatchewan, Greg Huszar Photography, Over the Hill Orchards

Measure

Number of injured workers provided assistance with respect to their WCB claims



Source: Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety

Measure Description

Over the past three years, the number of injured workers assisted with their Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) claim by the Office of the Workers' Advocate (OWA) has averaged about 790. Overall, though the past couple years illustrate a slight dip compared to 2010-11, the number of injured workers being provided assistance by the OWA has steadily increased.

While there are more claims than the numbers illustrate here, not all claimants will require the assistance of the OWA. The numbers in the above graph only indicate those who have sought assistance.

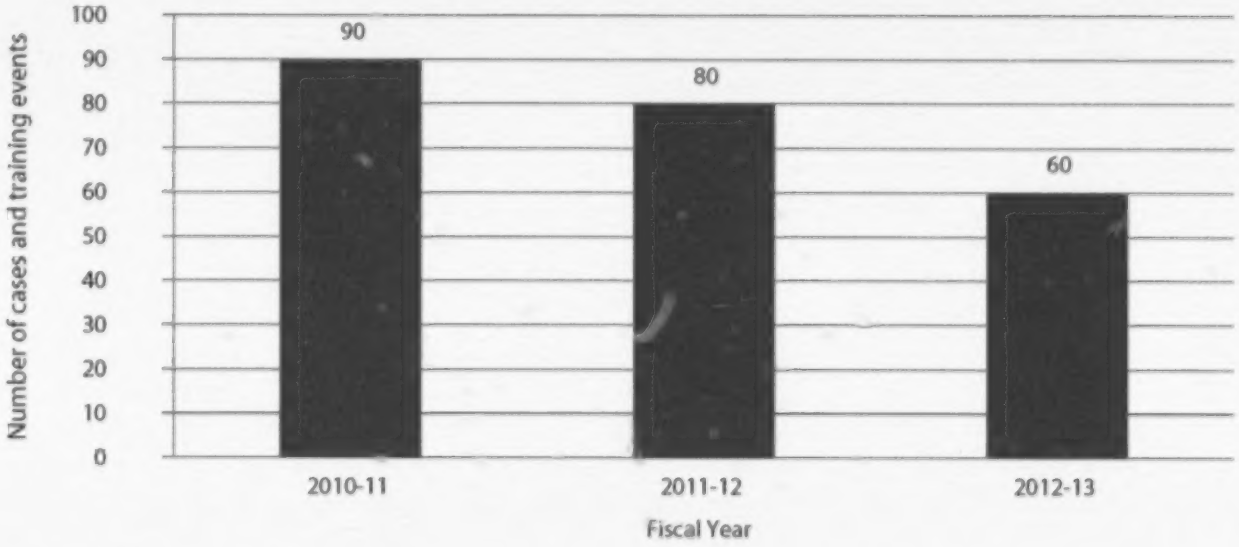
The OWA is mandated under *The Workers' Compensation Act, 2013* to provide assistance to injured workers with respect to a claim being advanced for compensation. Early intervention and positive outcomes for these injured workers is a key contributor in fostering healthy and productive workplaces. This contributes to the overall effectiveness of the workers' compensation system, to the health of the injured worker, and to the productivity of the businesses involved.

Data on the number of injured workers provided assistance is collected internally by the Ministry.

Photo Credit: Tourism Saskatchewan, Greg Huszar Photography, Jones Peak, near Eastend

Measure

Total number of cases provided by the Labour Relations and Mediation (LRM) Division



Source: Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety

Measure Description

The graph above illustrates that, over the past few years, client demand for services provided by the Labour Relations and Mediation (LRM) Division has decreased slightly. These services include conciliations, mediations, grievance mediations, and interest-based negotiations.

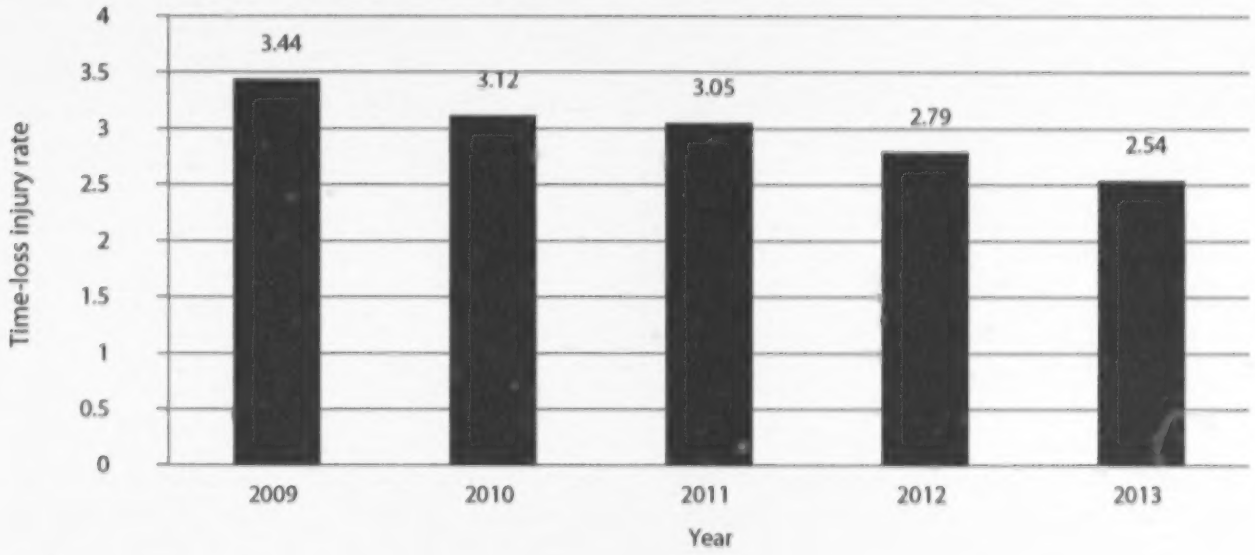
Client demand is outside the influence of the Division and is mainly reflective of the labour environment as a whole and the number of collective bargaining agreements being negotiated. Currently, mediation and conciliation services are optional and not a requirement. *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* will impact client demand by requiring conciliation or mediation before taking job action. It can be expected that the demand on LRM services will rise in the years ahead.

Data on the number of cases and training events provided by LRM is collected internally by the Ministry.

Photo Credit: Courtesy of Enterprise Saskatchewan, Sub-surface Geological Lab

Measure

Time-loss injury rate (per 100 full-time equivalent workers)



Source: Workers' Compensation Board

Measure Description

The data collected between 2009 and 2013 illustrates a continual decrease in Saskatchewan's workplace time-loss injury rate. However, Saskatchewan continues to have the second highest workplace time-loss injury rate in Canada next to Manitoba.

Safe and healthy workplaces are a key contributor to economic growth and prosperity. This measure provides an indicator of the relative number of workplace injuries in comparison to the Canadian average. It measures the number of lost-time injuries (workplace injuries that result in time away from work) reported to, and accepted by, the Workers' Compensation Board (WCB) per 100 full-time equivalent workers. When there is a reduction in the number of lost-time claims, it indicates that fewer workers are being injured on the job.

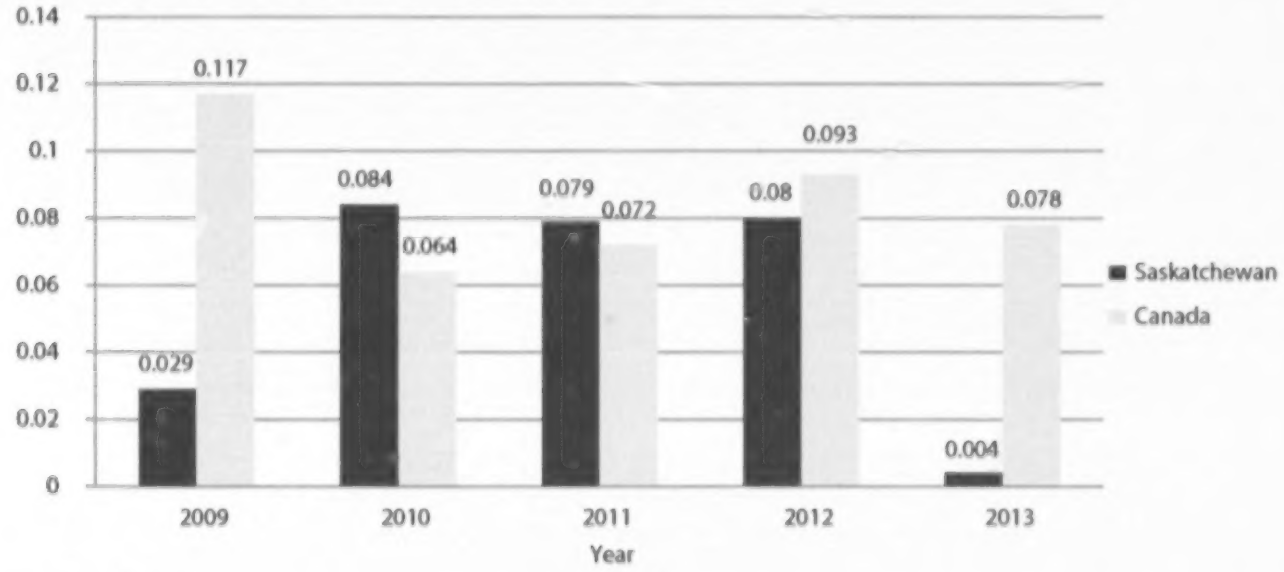
Government can influence this rate through safety awareness efforts, including public advertisements, injury prevention campaigns and enforcement of labour legislation. However, the Ministry has limited direct influence on the overall workplace injury rate due to a variety of reasons including changing demographics and rapid industry growth.

The data is based on WCB statistics. It is important to note that the WCB does not cover all workers.

Photo Credit: Ministry of Parks, Culture and Sport, Davin Andrie, Hunt Falls

Measure

Saskatchewan person-days lost performance compared to Canada



Source: Statistics Canada

Measure Description

The graph above represents the person-days lost due to a strike or lockout per labour force member (worker) in Saskatchewan and Canada. In 2013, the number of person-days lost reached a new low for the past five year period. For the past couple years, the number of person-days lost in Saskatchewan has been lower than the national figure indicating a relatively positive labour environment.

The figure is calculated by dividing the size of the labour force by the number of person-days lost within each jurisdiction. The figure for Canada is a national average and includes the total size of the labour force and person-days lost across the country, meaning each of the federal, provincial and territorial jurisdictions.

When considering the data since 2009, sometimes the number of person-days lost has been greater in Saskatchewan compared to Canada, thus above average, and sometimes less. It is important to note that the Ministry has no direct control over labour stability as a whole. The Ministry assists by providing mediation and conciliation services to help facilitate positive collective bargaining outcomes.

The number of strikes and lockouts can fluctuate depending on the number of expired agreements, union density, and the disposition of the labour environment.

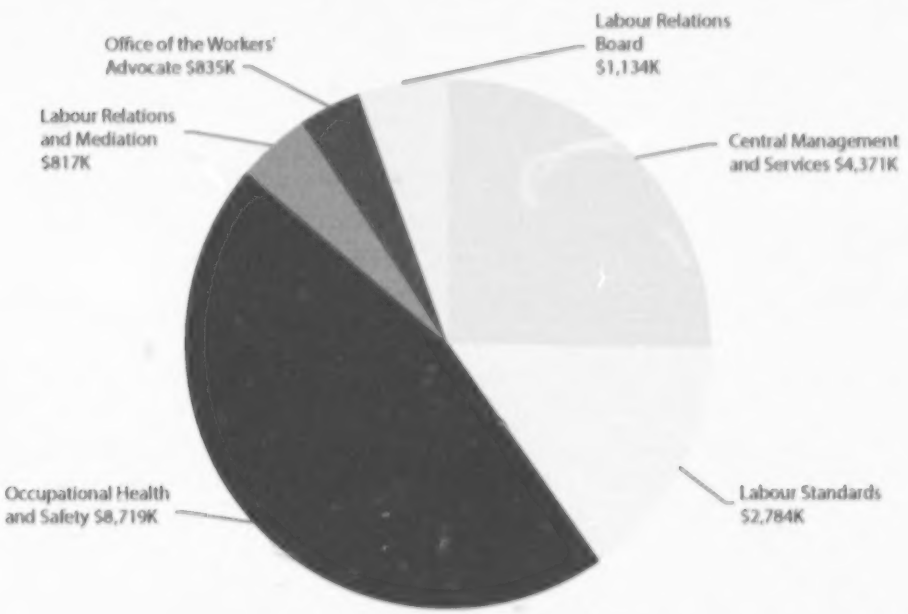
The information for this indicator is collected by Statistics Canada's Labour Force Survey.

Financial Summary

2014-15 Estimates	(in thousands of dollars)
Central Management and Services	$4,371
Labour Standards	$2,784
Occupational Health and Safety	$8,719
Labour Relations and Mediation	$817
Office of the Workers' Advocate	$835
Labour Relations Board	$1,134
Ministry Operations Appropriation	**$18,660**
Capital Acquisitions	($100)
Non-Appropriated Expense Adjustment	$122
Total Expense	**$18,682**
FTE Staff Complement	**151.1**

For more information, see the Budget Estimates at: http://www.saskatchewan.ca/budget

Ministry of Labour Relations and Workplace Safety Appropriation by Subvote


Office of the Workers' Advocate $835K
Labour Relations Board $1,134K
Labour Relations and Mediation $817K
Central Management and Services $4,371K
Occupational Health and Safety $8,719K
Labour Standards $2,784K

Government of Saskatchewan

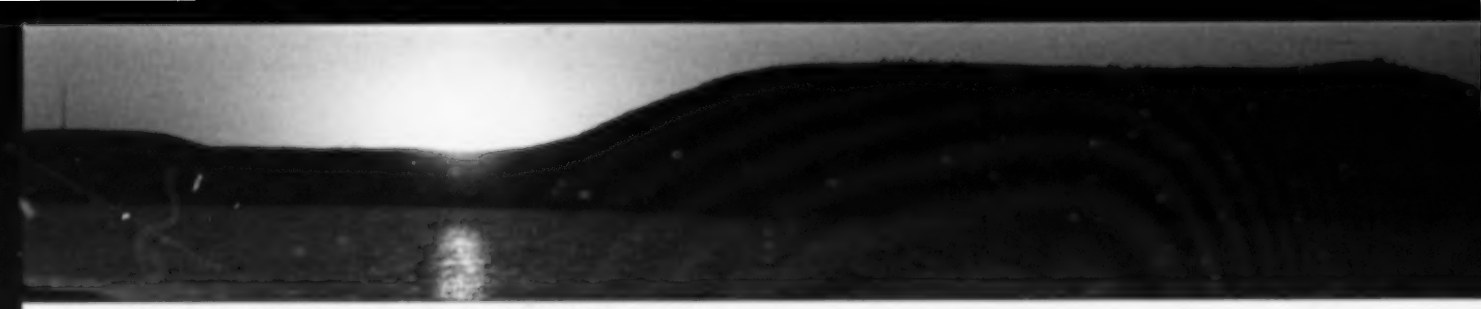


Photo Credit: Saskatchewan Watershed Authority, photo by Vicki East, Rafferty Reservoir

Highlights

2014-15 Budget Highlights:

- The Government maintains its zero tolerance for workplace injuries and deaths and will continue to make occupational health and safety a priority.
- The Ministry will:
  - Proclaim *The Saskatchewan Employment Act* (SEA);
  - Pass *The Saskatchewan Employment Amendment Act, 2013*, to amend and incorporate essential services legislation into the SEA;
  - Enforce labour standards and occupational health and safety obligations;
  - Allocate $125K for additional resources to assist workers who have filed a workers' compensation claim and wish to explore an appeal; and
  - Provide conciliation and mediation services to assist collective bargaining where required.

For More Information

Please visit the Ministry's website at www.saskatchewan.ca/government/ministries/labour-relations-and-workplace-safety, or call (306) 787-9478 for more information on the Ministry's programs and services.

Front Page Photo Credits

Canola and flax fields	*Biking, Narrow Hills Provincial Park*	*Over the Hill Orchards*	*Saskatchewan Legislative Building*
Photographer, Charles Melnick	*Greg Huszar Photography*	*Greg Huszar Photography*	*Greg Huszar Photography*